

Membership and Policy Guide



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Lend A Heart Animal-Assisted Therapy, Inc.
Post Office Box 60617
Sacramento, California 95860

Email: lendaheart.aat@gmail.com

Website: www.lendaheart.org

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PREFACE

The purpose of this Guide is to provide prospective and current Lend A Heart (LAH) members with information fundamental to being an LAH animal-assisted therapy volunteer.

INTRODUCTION

History

Local dog club members founded LAH in March of 1987 with a shared interest in providing the greater Sacramento community with evaluated and trained animals for animal-assisted therapy.

LAH is incorporated as a 501 (c) (3) charitable non-profit organization.

Mission Statement

Lend A Heart is a volunteer organization comprised of certified handler and animal teams, and associated volunteers, dedicated to providing compassion and understanding for our clients through animal-assisted therapy.

Vision Statement

To be a respected, dynamic professional organization providing animal-assisted therapy in Sacramento and adjacent counties with sustained manageable growth that enhances our organizational composition while meeting increased demand for our services.

Core Values

Integrity – Demonstrate commitment, responsibility and honesty in all of our activities.

Quality- Treat everyone, the public, clients and colleagues, with respect, dignity and sensitivity while continually striving to improve our services to the community.

Commitment- Maintain a consistency of purpose to improve our members and our organization through training and teamwork.

Celebrate Diversity- Respect, value and welcome diversity in our organization as well as in the facilities and populations we serve.

Guiding Principles

LAH trainees and members are:

- Expected to act with kindness and consideration of others while volunteering with and representing our organization.
- To act with the highest standards of honesty and ethical conduct while volunteering with and representing our organization. In all cases, if you are unsure about the appropriateness of an activity or action, seek assistance from the LAH Board of Directors.
- To be responsible at all times for your animal's needs and humane care above all else.

1 MEMBERSHIP

1.1 MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

LAH is dedicated to making a difference in the lives of individuals in our community. If you are interested in being a volunteer who touches hundreds of lives each year, bringing

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smiles, joy, much needed communication, unconditional love, and friendship while interacting with your pet, then this is the organization for you!

We want our volunteers and pets to feel comfortable and secure in the therapy setting. LAH membership requirements are designed to benefit the handler, the pet, and the facilities we serve. While the following steps toward active membership may seem extensive, the time and activities pass quickly.

Steps to Joining Lend A Heart



1.1.1 Membership Criteria

- All teams are required to meet LAH criteria regardless of other certifications you or your pet may already have.
- Pets must be a normally domesticated dog, cat or rabbit of at least one year old and spayed or neutered.
- You must have personally owned your pet for a minimum of six months.
- All pets must possess a sound temperament and be people oriented.
- All dogs must have basic obedience skills.

1.1.2 Membership Considerations

Becoming an animal-assisted therapy team requires time and commitment. Our commitment to the facilities and clients we serve necessitates that each LAH volunteer, in turn, assumes responsibility for maintaining his/her commitments to LAH.

First, consider the commitments you are about to make, including the time to prepare you and your pet for each animal-assisted therapy visit; driving to and attending visits regularly; participating in LAH meetings and events; and fundraising.

Next, take an objective look at your pet:

- Does your pet have the correct temperament for animal-assisted therapy?
- Does your pet calmly accept and enjoy petting from a variety of people? This trait is the foundation of a candidate for animal-assisted therapy.
- Does your dog listen to your commands? Can your dog heel on a loose leash as well as sit, down, and stay? Obedience is important and demonstrates that you and your dog work as a team – that you are aware of and in control of your dog at all times and that your dog pays attention to you.
- Does your dog exhibit behavior that could give the appearance of aggression? Does your dog bark uncontrollably, growl, lunge, snap or bite? Such behaviors are not acceptable in LAH.
- Is your pet tolerant of other animals? Can your pet be in the company of other animals and remain calm without becoming overly excited, fearful or aggressive? Animal-assisted therapy pets should be neutral with other visiting pets.

1.2 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

If you believe you have met the membership criteria and agree to accept the volunteer commitment you may obtain the Membership Application Packet from the LAH website or

from a LAH officer or Board member. The Membership Application Packet contains three forms:

- Application for Membership: completed by the individual applying (dog, cat and rabbit handlers).
- Behavior and Obedience Verification Form: dog handlers only, completed by a trainer or behaviorist with the handler and dog present.
- Health Screening Form: completed by a veterinarian with dog, cat and rabbit handlers present. Note: negative fecal results are required annually to apply for and maintain LAH membership.

Additional instructions are found in the Membership Application Packet. *All forms must be received by LAH at least one week prior to your Evaluation appointment.*

1.2.1 Shadow Visit

A “shadow visit” is required prior to your first visit as a LAH trainee. During a “shadow visit” you will have an opportunity to observe how animals are used in animal-assisted therapy and how handlers respond to different situations that arise. You may attend as many of these visits as you wish.

- Select a facility to visit from our on line list.
- **Do not bring your pet to the shadow visit**
- E-mail your visit selection to lendaheart.aat@gmail.com
- Your request will be routed to the Team Leader at that facility and they will contact you with specific information with regard to directions, parking and any special rules or requirements for the visit you have selected.

1.2.2 General Membership Meeting

You are welcome to attend a General Membership Meeting at any point in the membership process or as a visitor wanting to learn more about LAH. Pets are welcome and are encouraged to be in attendance as this provides an additional socialization and obedience training opportunity. General Membership Meetings are held on the last Thursday of each month beginning at 7:00 PM. The location of the meeting can be found on the LAH website.

1.3 ORIENTATION

LAH Orientations are held three or four times per year. Prior to being evaluated for LAH membership, you and your pet must attend an Orientation together. The Orientation addresses various aspects of animal-assisted therapy work as well as the organizational structure and required membership obligations. Orientations also provide an opportunity to observe the interactions of you and your pet and allow for a general assessment of your readiness to be formally evaluated for animal-assisted therapy work. At the conclusion of the Orientation the teams that demonstrate pet obedience, socialization and teamwork will be invited to schedule an Evaluation.

Orientation requirements:

- Your pet must be clean, brushed and free of fleas. Eyes, ears and teeth must be clean and nails trimmed.
- Small, discreet, kibble-sized treats are permitted. No bones, rawhides or chew toys are allowed.

- It is recommended that you bring a mat or towel for your dog to lie on. Your cat or rabbit must be brought in a carrier.
- Dogs must be leashed at all times and cats and rabbits must be in harnesses or leashed.
- Your overall appearance must be clean and appropriate.

1.4 EVALUATION

Evaluation appointments are scheduled several weeks following Orientation. All three forms in your Membership Packet must be received at least one week before your Evaluation appointment. Once all three forms are completed, make a copy for your personal records. Mail the originals to:

LAH
Post Office Box 60617
Sacramento, California 95860

Or scan all three forms and email to lendaheart.aat@gmail.com

Evaluation requirements:

- Bring your copy of your Membership Application forms with you.
- Come to the Evaluation dressed and prepared as you would to a LAH client visit.
- Arrive at your scheduled time.

You will either pass your Evaluation or you may be informed of some areas that need additional work to become a successful animal-assisted therapy team. You may schedule another Evaluation when you feel that you have made the suggested corrections.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Passing the LAH Evaluation does not qualify your pet as a service animal. LAH therapy animals must observe all laws that exclude animals from food and medical establishments, indoor shopping malls, public buildings and public transportation. Posing a therapy dog as a service dog is illegal as well as a violation of LAH policy.

1.5 PROBATIONARY MEMBERSHIP

Upon successful completion of your evaluation you will become a LAH Trainee and begin a three to four month probationary period required of all LAH therapy teams.

Trainee Requirements:

- Trainees must wear a red shirt.
- You and your pet must attend a minimum of six visits.
- Sign up for each visit and call or email the Team Leader at least 24 hours in advance of the visit.
- You will receive a Trainee Visit form that Team Leaders will use to document your visits. Team Leaders will give you both verbal and written feedback concerning your performance. LAH members, Officers and Directors are available to you to assist you in developing and improving your animal-assisted therapy skills. LAH therapy teams endeavor to improve their skills regardless of how long they have been volunteering.
- Trainees are encouraged to participate in LAH public education and fundraising events.

- Upon completion of your trainee membership period mail the Trainee Visit form to the address provided on the form. It is recommended that you keep a copy for your records.

Upon receipt of your Trainee Visit form, the LAH Vice President or designee will review comments made by Team Leaders and make a determination as to your readiness to move to active LAH membership status. Some teams may be advised that they may need additional probation time to reach the skill levels required for active membership.

1.6 ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

Upon completion of the membership requirements you will receive a Certificate of Membership stating that you and your pet are a LAH animal-assisted therapy team.

Note: You and your pet are certified as an animal-assisted therapy team ONLY for official LAH functions as listed on the on-line LAH volunteer calendar. Posing a therapy dog as a service dog is illegal and a violation of LAH policy and will result in revocation of your LAH membership.

As an Active Member you will be able to purchase a LAH vest and other items with the LAH logo. Handler and dog vests are worn only to LAH programs and events.

Active Membership Requirements:

- All active members are required to obtain LAH ID name and pet tags.
- Members are required to wear LAH member vests and/or other attire to all events or programs identifying you as an LAH volunteer.
- The official LAH colors are red and white.
- To remain an active member a volunteer must participate in a minimum of two hours of therapy visits or programs each month and contribute a minimum of four hours at events or fundraisers each year.
- Your pet must be healthy and current on all necessary vaccinations. Current proof of vaccination and negative fecal results must be carried by LAH teams and provided to Team Leaders or LAH officers or Board members upon request. If these records are unavailable you may have your membership suspended until the required records have been provided.
- Expiration dates for pet vaccinations must be posted by the member in the member's profile on the LAH online VolunteerMatters website. Failure to post the required health information within four months of the expiration date will result in termination of membership and required reapplication to LAH.
- The optional LAH Therapy Dog vest may only be purchased from the LAH-authorized vendor. Information regarding ordering the dog vest is provided to Active Members.

1.6.1 Leaves of Absence

If you are not able to attend programs regularly for more than four consecutive weeks please contact the LAH President to request a Leave of Absence. A leave of greater than four months may require re-evaluation prior to attending programs. An absence of four months or greater or sporadic attendance at programs where a leave of absence has not been granted may result in re-application for membership as well as evaluation.

1.6.2 Members with Multiple Pets

LAH members may handle multiple pets in compliance with the following:

- You must be an active member in good standing for six months or more, and demonstrated regular program attendance.
- You must follow the membership requirements, beginning with completion of the Membership Application Packet.
- Under no circumstances may the member bring more than one LAH therapy animal to any program at any one time.

1.6.3 Junior Handler

LAH grants Junior Handler status to children between 10 and 17 years of age. Junior Handlers are considered members and must go through the regular LAH membership process. However, Junior Handlers are required to attend three regular LAH visits in the three-month training/probation period. Once passed into Active Membership, Junior Handlers are required to volunteer at least one hour per month and contribute at least two hours per year at fundraisers and events. Junior Handlers between 10 and 15 years of age must be accompanied by an adult at all times; both are expected to follow LAH guidelines.

1.6.4 LAH Puppy and Kitten Program

LAH members may apply to handle puppies and kittens at LAH visits. The Puppy and Kitten Program requirements include the following:

1. The applicant must have been an active member, (completed the probationary membership period) handling another pet for a period of at least six months.
2. The puppy or kitten must be between the ages of four months and one year when the member applies for participation in the LAH Puppy and Kitten Program.
3. The member must complete a Membership Application and Health Screening Form. The puppy or kitten must be fully vaccinated and a negative fecal test must be documented on the Health Screening Form.
4. The LAH Vice President or designee must approve the application and schedule a puppy/kitten evaluation.
5. Prior to the first visit, an LAH Evaluator will determine if the team is appropriate for the Puppy and Kitten Program.

LAH Puppy and Kitten Program handlers work with Team Leaders and members to develop visiting skills, and teams may be re-evaluated at any time to determine their continued appropriateness for program participation.

Puppy/kitten handlers must apply for standard LAH membership when their animals are between the ages of eight and 20 months, and schedule a standard LAH Evaluation at the next available evaluation session. Continued participation based upon the outcome of the LAH Evaluation is at the direction of the Vice President. As with other LAH animals, LAH ID tags are required upon successful completion of the probationary membership period.

1.6.5 Associate Member

LAH grants Associate Membership to individuals who support our organization's goals and wish to donate time during fundraisers, at events, and so forth. These individuals are not LAH pet handlers. Each individual who wants to become an Associate Member will complete

the LAH Application for Membership. An Associate Member may purchase the LAH vest and/or logo items for official LAH visits and events.

LAH grants Junior Associate Membership to individuals ages 10 through 17 who would like to assist our organization at programs and events. A parent or guardian must complete the Application for Membership for individuals who want to become a Junior Associate Members. A Junior Associate Member may purchase the LAH vest and/or logo items for official LAH visits and events. Junior Associate Members between 10 and 15 years of age must be accompanied by an adult at all times; both are expected to follow LAH guidelines.

1.7 GENERAL VOLUNTEER PRINCIPLES

LAH is a volunteer organization and every member or trainee must live up to the responsibility and commitment of your volunteer service role. Service work is not something that can be done in a few odd hours when there is nothing more exciting to do. Rather, service work is a responsibility that requires a definite allotment of time, energy, intelligence, and a real desire to prepare for the job.

1.7.1 Volunteer Principles:

- Be present and on time for every commitment you make. People are looking forward to your pet's visit and the time you share. If you find yourself unable to meet an obligation, notify the Team Leader as far in advance as possible. Remember - if you don't come, someone will be disappointed.
- Respect the confidential aspects of your assignment and the dignity and privacy of the people with whom you visit.
- Show empathy to people; don't show sympathy. Empathy is the ability to relate to another and understand their feelings without condescension and over-involvement.
- Treat fellow LAH members respectfully and politely.
- Stay with your pet and in control of the situation at all times.
- Become involved, in a warm and natural manner, with the people you meet. Don't become over-involved and, if in doubt, discuss your feelings with a Team Leader.
- Be optimistic about life in general and an individual's outlook in particular. But don't encourage unrealistic goals and attitudes.
- Be honest and genuine at all times.
- Be friendly while having fun yourself.
- Be part of the team. Be willing to accept supervision, instruction and guidance from the LAH Team Leader and/or facility staff member.
- Ask a staff member, Team Leader or coordinator about anything you do not understand. Don't harbor any doubts or frustrations.
- Keep learning, training and working toward becoming the best therapy team possible!

Those who meet and work with you and your pet appreciate your time and commitment. You are part of a group that cares about the service it is performing in our community.

2 PROGRAMS/THERAPY VISITS

2.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The length of stay for an LAH animal-assisted therapy visit is usually one hour. Allow time before and after the visit for your pet to rest. Visitors are always welcome to attend LAH programs without their pets and must follow LAH guidelines (refer to section 2.7 During the Program/Visit) and facility etiquette.

Trainees and members must sign up to attend LAH events and programs using the calendars in VolunteerMatters or by directly contacting the Team Leader. This creates a record for insurance purposes as well as documenting that members are maintaining active status with LAH. Verify your attendance by going to the "Volunteering" tab in your VolunteerMatters profile.

If you sign up for a program and later determine that you cannot attend, use the "Withdraw" function in VolunteerMatters. As a courtesy send an email to the Team Leader if possible.

Be certain of the time of your visit and location of the facility you will be attending. Facility information can be found on the LAH VolunteerMatters online calendar, and on the page where you sign up for the program. LAH makes every effort to schedule programs and events months in advance so you are able to plan for these activities. Please be sure the Team Leader is aware that you are planning to attend a particular function so she/he can better prepare for a successful program. Sign up using the calendars in VolunteerMatters or call/email the Team or Event Leader.

2.2 INSURANCE

LAH maintains group insurance that covers participation in official LAH functions. This policy covers injuries to others and facility property damages in connection with you and your pet's visit. LAH's insurance policy does not cover LAH teams themselves for any incidents occurring at programs and events outside of LAH.

2.3 HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Programs at health care facilities require special mention. Many animal-assisted therapy programs take place in health care facilities. It is imperative that both the handler and the pet be healthy and clean. Some clients in the facilities we visit have reduced immunity and we do not want to endanger them. If you and your pet are scheduled for an activity and one of you is ill, let your Team Leader know that you will not be attending and withdraw from the visit in VolunteerMatters. If you have a question about how you or your pet's health would be perceived, contact your Team Leader immediately to determine whether you should attend. Some health care facilities may also have additional health requirements that must be complied with prior to the visit.

2.4 GENERAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The following general guidelines are to be observed:

- Bring a bag with items that your pet may need or utilize during the program. The following items are recommended: 1) water and a bowl; 2) poop bags, or other

equipment to clean up after your pet; 3) a towel - should the ground be wet or to keep muzzle free of drool; 4) a brush for "sprucing up" before entering a facility; 5) lint brush or tape to remove stray animal fur or hair from clients; and 6) hand sanitizer.

- Never allow your pet to be off leash during a visit at a facility. **Maintain control of your pet at all times**, including in the parking and outdoors areas.
- Small dogs and cats should be able to lie quietly in someone's lap without wiggling. Cats should be encouraged not to knead with their claws.
- Towels, blankets or lap pillows are to be used whenever an animal is placed in a client's lap or on a bed. You should familiarize your pet to these items prior to your visit.
- Medium sized dogs may be taught to sit on a low step stool or chair when visiting with clients who have limited mobility. By utilizing such items, the pet's head is brought within reach for the client. The stool should be lightweight, covered in a non-slip material and large enough for the pet to sit comfortably. Large dogs may be taught to put their paws up on a stool, and/or sit by a client and gently place their head in the lap.
- Do not allow anyone else to hold your pet's leash.
- Arrive at the facility ten to fifteen minutes early to meet with the Team Leader and prepare for the visit.
- Pets must be clean, brushed and free of fleas. The use of flea collars, powders, sprays or dips is not permitted. Flea drops must be applied a minimum of seven days prior to attending any therapy programs.
- Clean the pet's ears, remove any drainage matter from eyes and check pet's breath (if sour give the teeth a quick brushing).
- Do not cut or trim toenails two or three days prior to a visit, as they will be rough and may scratch a client. If you are planning to clip your pet's nails within a day or two of a program, take extra time to file the nails as well or use a nail grinder.
- Assess overall health and attitude of the animal. DO NOT take your pet if he/she is feeling out of sorts; has hot spots or open lesions. If your pet is on any type of medication that could cause excessive urination, diarrhea or vomiting, please do not attend programs until the end of the treatment cycle.
- If you are a trainee, give your training form to the Team Leader (or designee) before the visit or event begins.

2.5 ATTIRE AND EQUIPMENT

- The appearance of trainees and members must be clean and neat. Handlers and pets must be free of offensive odors. Refrain from using any fragrances.
- At official LAH functions, all trainees and members must wear apparel identifying them as LAH teams or volunteers. Take pride in your team's appearance – both you and your pet. LAH-approved equipment promotes the safety of our pets as well as those we serve.
- Attire must be professional and appropriate. Temperatures at the facilities fluctuate extremely, dress accordingly. Nice jeans or slacks are suggested with conservative shorts acceptable for hot weather. Members wear the LAH red vest over a clean blouse or shirt of any color in good condition or red LAH logo apparel. Members wear the LAH identification badges. Trainees wear a red shirt and the trainee badges. Shirts, pants and shoes must be clean and free of rips, stains, holes and dirt.

- Footwear is required at all LAH programs. Some facilities or visits require closed-toed shoes; these are generally hospitals and skilled nursing facilities. Check with the Team Leader if you are unsure about footwear requirements. Sandals are acceptable at some programs in warm weather. Flip-flops are prohibited at all programs.
- Dogs are to use a flat, non-slip quick release collar, a martingale with a plastic quick-release buckle, or a dog harness with two quick release mechanisms, such as an Easy Walker. Choke chains, buckle, pinch or slip collars, Halties, figure 8s, chains or any other type of restrictive collars are not permitted. Headgear, Gentle Leaders, or muzzles are not allowed. Cats and rabbits are to use a harness and leash.
- Pet equipment must be clean and in good condition.
- All leashes are to be a maximum of four feet in length; larger dogs may be placed on shorter leashes such as traffic leads. Flexi, bungee or coiled type leads are NOT permitted.
- The LAH Team Leader, Officer or Board member may require specific equipment for an individual team. If directed to use specific equipment, trainees and members must comply.
- Body piercing on animals, including spacers, are not to be worn during LAH animal-assisted therapy visits.

2.6 TEAM LEADERS

Team Leaders are vital to the LAH success. Team Leaders support trainees and member teams and are the primary points of contact for facilities served by LAH. Team Leaders are appointed by and work under the LAH President or designee. Each facility has a Team Leader. Team Leaders are responsible for the following:

- Verifying that every visit is listed on the LAH calendar with the name of the facility and time of visit. A brief description of the type of visit may be included.
- Attending at least one Orientation, Evaluation and Team Leader workshop per year.
- Observing and report on trainee/probationary teams.
- Monitoring the performance of active LAH member teams.
- Periodically asking members for required vaccination and fecal exam documents.
- Ensuring the teams meet all requirements such as cleanliness and appropriate dress before entering the facility.

2.7 DURING THE PROGRAM/VISIT

First and foremost, our commitment to the clients we serve is our highest priority. LAH therapy teams strive to perform consistently at animal-assisted therapy visits. Please take time to read, understand and follow these guidelines:

- NEVER drop your leash while visiting with a client, walking through a facility, or when socializing with LAH teams or facility staff after a visit. Under the direction of the Team Leader, some LAH programs have a demonstration of obedience or tricks at the start of group visits. With the Team Leader's permission, you may perform off-leash demonstrations with your dog at this time ONLY. No clients may visit with your therapy pet while he/she is off leash.
- NEVER assist a client getting in or out of a bed or chair. While it may seem cruel or heartless not to give aid, you are not trained or insured for this activity. Your best intentions in assisting could result in pain or injury to someone you truly want to help. Instead, call an authorized staff member for help.

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- Take breaks during a visit as often as needed. Always inform the Team Leader or another LAH member when you are taking a break.
- Animals should not be allowed to relieve themselves near any entrance or on any lawn of a facility. Be sure to go to an area well away from the building and always clean up after your pet.
- Check with each Team Leader for the boundaries on the use of treats at each individual facility. Treats can distract a dog's ability to focus on pet therapy. Since our purpose is to provide animal-assisted therapy, we need to be mindful of how the use of food can prevent other dogs from being able to focus on visiting with clients. If treats are allowed, use small, discreet, kibble-sized treats only. Bones, rawhides or chew toys are not allowed at visits, meetings or events. Plastic bags to hold treats can also distract the attention of other dogs and are not allowed.
- No one other than you may work with your pet at any LAH function. Do not have another individual (including a client, LAH trainee/member or facility staff member) handle your animal.
- Be aware of your proximity to other teams and try to maintain a reasonable distance between animals; three to four feet is recommended.
- Approach other teams from the front to avoid startling the other team upon your arrival.
- Your pet's leash may not dangle or trail on the floor. This could cause a client or staff person to trip and be seriously hurt, as well as possibly injure the animal.
- Do not secure/tie your leash to a chair leg or leave your pet during a visit or event. Use a crate or X-pen during events, if needed.
- Take every precaution to help ensure that your pet does not urinate in a facility. If an accident does occur, clean it up immediately and take your pet outdoors. Inform the Team Leader and discuss possible causes and solutions to this situation so it does not occur again.
- Never let your pet lick the floor and discourage your pet from licking clients. Medications, disinfectants and human wastes/fluids can make your pet seriously ill or even be fatal.
- Your dog may not bark continuously. An occasional bark is acceptable, but constant barking is extremely disruptive and is not permitted. Larger dogs with deeper, louder voices should be more restrained from barking as their bark can scare an unprepared client or staff person.
- Growling, hissing, lunging, and/or snapping/biting at other animals or people are unacceptable. Such behavior will be reported on the LAH Incident Report form. If problems of this nature continue to occur, the team's membership may be terminated. Be aware if your pet is uncomfortable or stressed, and remove your pet from the visit. Do not put others at risk.
- Know visually where your pet is and what he/she is doing at all times during the visit, for the clients' safety as well as your pets. You must be continually aware of any inappropriate behavior so that every client and LAH team is able to have a pleasant, safe, and successful visit.
- If you see a problem occurring or have a concern about another LAH team before, during, or after a visit, event or meeting, you are required to report it as soon as possible to the Team Leader, Event Chairperson, or LAH Board member. Problems and concerns include but are not limited to: dirty animal; growling; lunging; handler not abiding by LAH Membership Guide or Bylaws, etc.
- Correct your pet privately. If your pet makes a mistake during a demonstration, do not correct or repeat the exercise; programs are presentations, not training exercises.

- If possible, have a facility staff member accompany you on your room visits or group therapy programs. Their input and knowledge of residents can make our visit more productive.
- For room visits, look at entryways to ensure access to the client is not restricted due to medical needs, infectious conditions or other factors. Notices regarding room entry are commonly posted near room numbers or name plates.
- Always ask a client if he or she would like to have the pet visit before approaching them too closely. Some people could become frightened or feel threatened, and react adversely. Never enter an individual's room without knocking and asking permission first. Always respect the client's privacy!
- When a client is visiting with your pet, be ready to remove the animal at any sign of discomfort or stress. Never leave your pet anywhere unattended. Always hold the leash and remain in control.
- Always be alert to protect your pet's tail and/or paws from being accidentally run over by wheelchairs or walkers. Exercise extreme caution when around clients who appear frail, unsteady walking, on crutches, etc. Make certain that your pet does not throw them off balance or cause them to fall.
- If you move anything (bed table, bed rail, chair, etc.) during a visit, always be sure and return it to its original position before leaving.
- Refrain from introducing potentially controversial topics while representing LAH at any function.
- Trainees and members must not speak disparagingly about other LAH teams, facilities, or clients. If there is a grievance that cannot be worked out, address it with a Team Leader, LAH Board Member or file an Incident Report with the President.

2.8 AFTER THE PROGRAM/VISIT

- Remove the LAH Therapy Dog vest if your dog is wearing one.
- Praise your pet or offer a favorite treat as a special reward for a job well done.
- Evaluate the visit with the other volunteers and your Team Leader, while considering ways to improve your next visit. For example, shorter or longer time frame, fewer clients to visit, more verbal reinforcement, breaks, and so forth.
- Realize and respect that most animals will be exhausted after your visit. The stimulation and excitement is more than most of us could imagine. Your pet should be offered water and will need a long, quiet rest period.
- If you are a trainee, the Team Leader (or designee) will fill out your Trainee Visit form. Team Leaders may not fill out the Trainee Visit form of their own pet on probation, but must be observed by another Team Leader or a LAH member of a year or more in good standing.
- No one may fill out the Trainee Visit form of any trainees or probationary pets that are part of their own family, or are deemed as familiar as family as designated by the Vice President. Another Team Leader or a LAH member of a year or more in good standing should be in observance and complete the Trainee Visit form for the visit.

2.9 PARTICIPATING IN OTHER VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

LAH has cooperative agreements with other volunteer programs that support our mission and values. These programs offer our members opportunities to volunteer with their pets at facilities that have formal volunteer programs of their own, such as hospitals. Each facility of this type has an assigned LAH Team Leader who coordinates with the facility and LAH

members. LAH active membership is required and participation in most other volunteer programs includes an application and approval process prior to attendance. Information regarding other volunteer programs is found in the descriptions on VolunteerMatters, or may be obtained from the assigned Team Leaders.

2.10 INDIVIDUAL VISITS

Although LAH teams visit together at the majority of LAH programs, the LAH Board of Directors may approve LAH Active Members for individual visits. Individual visits usually take place at hospitals as part of other volunteer programs. Each active member attending individual visits must be approved to visit and attend a minimum of one regular (group) LAH visit each month, or must be re-evaluated for continued LAH membership every two years.

2.11 SPECIAL PREREQUISITES

All costs associated with any special prerequisites are the responsibility of LAH members. Examples include regular school visits and hospital programs where proof of negative TB testing is required. Check with the assigned LAH Team Leader prior to incurring costs as some facilities provide services at no cost or offer reimbursement.

2.12 CHILDREN AT LAH PROGRAMS

With permission from the Team Leader, LAH members who have passed the probationary membership period may bring children over the age of eight to LAH programs and events. The LAH member must accept responsibility for making sure the child complies with LAH guidelines and facility requirements. Children at LAH programs may not directly handle a pet, nor interfere with the handler's attention to his/her pet. Team Leaders and members should use common sense in the types of programs that are appropriate for children to attend.

3 ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES

Lend A Heart operates, in order of precedence, according to the following:

1. Articles of Incorporation
2. Bylaws
4. Membership and Policy Guide
5. Robert's Rules of Order

3.1 LAH TRAINEE AND MEMBER INFORMATION

The LAH Secretary maintains files containing each trainee and member's Membership Application Packet, LAH Evaluation documents and other pertinent information.

Personal contact information for trainees and members is maintained on VolunteerMatters and is monitored by the LAH Secretary. No one may use the contact information of trainees and members for non-LAH business without the permission of individual trainees and/or members.

3.2 LAH WEBSITE

LAH recognizes the use of the Internet and email as valuable communication tools. However, misuse of these tools can have a negative impact upon our organization. The following policies address use of the LAH website:

- The LAH website is located at www.lendaheart.org where the public has access to information about LAH.
- No for-profit or non-profit businesses or individual enterprises may provide links to LAH's website on their own websites or in electronic or written communications without permission of the Board of Directors.
- All text, materials and images on the LAH website are controlled and managed by the LAH Board of Directors.
- Only Board authorized individuals with ID and password may make approved additions, modifications, and/or deletions to the LAH website and its contents.

3.3 VOLUNTEERMATTERS

VolunteerMatters is a private, online membership management service accessed via the LAH website. Access to VolunteerMatters is restricted by unique username and password, and is for trainees, associate members, and members only. Access to VolunteerMatters is controlled and managed by the Board of Directors.

The LAH directory and calendars are available on the LAH VolunteerMatters website. Official LAH functions and meetings are listed on the calendars. LAH volunteers may sign up to attend functions using these calendars.

Each individual granted access to VolunteerMatters is responsible for maintaining his/her profile information.

3.4 LAH GROUP EMAIL LIST

The email addresses of LAH trainees and members may be used as part of our group email list; *members@lendaheart.org*. Additions, modifications, and deletions to the LAH group email list are controlled and managed by the Board of Directors.

The group email list is for LAH business ONLY. Examples of LAH business include reminders of upcoming visits, announcements about events, and meeting notices.

The LAH group email list may not be used for transmitting any commercial or advertising material or messages, for personal messages, to send chain letters, for broadcasting views on social, political, religious, cross posting from other lists/organizations, nor for any other non-LAH business matters.

When you reply to a group message, consider if you simply need to reply to the sender (use your email's "Reply" function) or if you really need to reply to everyone on our distribution list ("Reply All" function).

Policies for use of the LAH group email list include the following:

- All email must adhere to the LAH Code of Conduct.
- To use the LAH group email list, you must be a member of the list.
- Users of the LAH group email list should take precautions, such as the use of updated anti-virus software, to avoid introducing any form of computer virus or malware through use of the LAH group email list.

- You must address the email to members@lendaheart.org as the only recipient. If you add other email addresses, the email message may not be delivered.

3.5 LEND A HEART ON FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE

At least two LAH Board Members or Officers administrate LAH's Facebook page and YouTube channel. Since these are open for the public to view or join, all postings must adhere to the LAH Code of Conduct. To post photos of clients you must have a Photo Consent Form signed by the client and filed with the LAH Secretary.

4 OPERATIONS

4.1 STORAGE FACILITY

The LAH Treasurer is responsible for the storage unit. The contents of the storage unit generally include:

- Event items (e.g. event bag, canopy, tables, chairs and signage)
- Evaluation items (e.g. equipment used during evaluations)
- Fundraising materials
- Celebration and special event items (e.g. holiday tree, cups, plates etc.)

Members should take care when removing and placing items in storage.

Information as to the current storage location and any access codes may be obtained from the Treasurer.

4.2 COMMUNITY EVENTS

LAH participates in animal-themed fairs and community events to increase awareness about animal assisted therapy, to recruit members and to fundraise.

The LAH President oversees participation in these events and may appoint a volunteer as the LAH Events Coordinator who is then the primary point of contact for all events. Each event also has a Team Leader as in other LAH programs.

Event participation fees are included in the annual LAH budget and any additional fees are subject to Board approval.

4.3 GROUP EMAIL LIST

LAH has a group email list, members@lendaheart.org. The list must be maintained as members join, resign or change email addresses.

The President has overall responsibility for the group email list. The email addresses of members are private and should be treated as such. Access to the group email list is limited to LAH Board members and others designated as designated by the President.

4.4 GMAIL ACCOUNT

LAH's general email address is lendaheart.aat@gmail.com. This email address is used for communication of a general nature. It is published on the LAH website, on business cards and in publication and PR materials. The majority of the email traffic received via gmail comes from facilities applying for LAH visits and potential members seeking information on LAH. Incident reports are also received via gmail.

The President has overall responsibility for administration of the gmail account. Access to gmail is limited to LAH Board members and others designated by the President.

4.5 DOMAIN REGISTRATION

The domain "lendaheart.org" and "lendaheart.net" are registered with a domain registration and renewal service. The Treasurer has overall responsibility for up keep of the domain registration.

5 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

5.1 NOMINATION AND SOLICITATION OF VOTES

This section is in compliance with LAH Bylaws, Article XI-Board of Directors, Section 9.

The board shall formulate procedures that allow a reasonable opportunity for a nominee to communicate to members the nominee's qualifications and the reasons for the nominee's candidacy, a reasonable opportunity for the nominee to solicit votes, and a reasonable opportunity for all members to choose among the nominees.

The LAH Nominating Committee identifies the Director and Officer candidates. Once a candidate accepts a nomination, she/he is considered a nominee.

The Nominating Committee Chairperson is responsible for administering the nomination process and solicitation of votes.

The LAH Board of Directors Nominee Form is a standard questionnaire that documents a nominee's qualifications and the reasons for the nominee's candidacy. This form may be updated or revised from time to time at the direction of the Board. The LAH Secretary maintains the current version of the LAH Board of Directors Nominee Form.

Any nominee disparaging another nominee or providing false or misleading information about his/herself or others, will be removed as a nominee for the current election year by decision of the Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee Chairperson compiles the completed Nominee Forms into a single document and emails it to all members.

Nominees may provide a speech or presentation of up to 10 minutes in length at Lend A Heart's Annual Membership Meeting in January. The speech or presentation is voluntary and shall focus on the nominee's qualifications and the reasons for the nominee's candidacy.

All LAH members are given an opportunity to vote at the Annual Membership Meeting, either in person or by proxy, as stated in the LAH Bylaws. The Bylaws establish that election of board members and directors must be by ballot, and general and associate members (members) in good standing are entitled to vote at an election (trainees are not yet

members). Members entitled to vote may cast their vote in person or by agent authorized by a written proxy, signed by the member and filed with the Secretary. A proxy is deemed signed if the member’s name is placed on the proxy by the member or the member’s attorney-in-fact, whether by manual signature, typewriting, facsimile transmission, or otherwise. The LAH Proxy Form is a standard form used for voting by proxy in the January election.

5.2 BOARD MEMBER EXPECTATIONS

Directors and Officers (Board members) lead the organization through active participation in meetings and by carrying out necessary duties and responsibilities.

Board members are expected to attend at least 75% of the following meetings, and required to attend a minimum of 60% of these meetings. The meetings are listed in order of priority:

Board members should make efforts to attend all Board meetings, and participate in Evaluations, Orientations and monthly General Membership meetings. The following table presents the estimated number of yearly meetings.

Meeting	# per year
Board	12+
Evaluation	3+
Orientation	3+
General Membership	11
Total	29+

Each Board member must attend a minimum 60% of meetings, or 17 meetings each year. If a Board member does not meet this minimum requirement, the Board will vote to warn the Board member of pending removal from the Board. Continued non-attendance is cause for vote for removal of the Director or Officer by the members, per LAH bylaws.

Each Board member must have a computer, access to the internet and basic computer skills. Knowledge of Word, Excel (or comparable Apple programs) is required.